HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District: Anacostia Historic District (x) Agenda

Address: 1350 Valley Place SE (x) Concept

Meeting Date: October 23, 2014 (x) New construction

Case Number: **14-667**Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée**

The applicant, owner District Properties (Mohamed Sikder), requests the Board's review of a conceptual application to construct a two-story frame house on a vacant lot.

In October of last year, the Board approved the concept for a nearly identical house on the southeastern end of this 53-foot-wide vacant parcel, 1352 Valley Place. And in March, the Board recommended approval of the subdivision of the parcel into one 22-foot-wide lot to contain 1352 Valley, and one 31-foot-wide lot to accommodate a second house, to leave a side yard of nine feet between the two buildings, suggested by a sketch site plan submitted at the time. That is what is now proposed.

The applicant proposes a design for the new house which is nearly identical to that of 1350 Valley, which, in turn, is very close to the design for 1620 U Street, approved in April 2013 and since built.

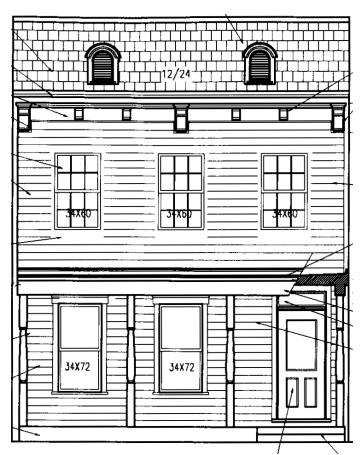
As discussed in the earlier report on 1352 Valley, the design is very historicist, copied pretty literally from old houses in the Uniontown subdivision. The previous staff report also discussed the issues with reusing the same design, saying that, whether advisable or not, it is compatible in many spots in the historic district, but not in all. Generally, Griswold's Addition, this southern section of the historic district, is characterized by front-gabled, cross-gabled, and hipped roofs. The houses are often larger, too. But this transitional area at the north end of Griswold's Addition has a variety of building and roof forms as well as house and lot sizes, and there are houses nearby similar to the form of that proposed, on Chester Street and Pleasant Street just to the north. High Street between Valley and 14th also has mansard-roofed and flat-roofed contributing buildings. The 1300 block of Valley Place itself has a whole row of boxy mansard-and porch-fronted houses, albeit constructed of brick. It would be difficult, therefore, to say that this form is incompatible for a new house at this particular location.

¹ Rowhouses, too, are unusual elsewhere in Griswold's Addition, as discussed in a July staff report relating to a proposal for a particularly wide and squat row that would be out of place on Maple View Place.

There are the usual concerns about details that have been expressed in previous reports for 1618, 1622 and 1624 U Street, 2221 and 2225 Chester Street, and 1352 Valley, all projects submitted by the same applicant. These include revising the cornice somewhat (properly sized brackets and eave depth, with a frieze behind the brackets); building the vents substantially as drawn; getting right the ridge mold or flashing detail at the roof ridge; ensuring the proper porch balustrade, posts, door and fencing; and making certain that there will be no electric meters in front of the house. The porch is also too shallow. Of course, it will be in the construction itself that adherence to the plans is tested.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept and delegate to staff further review to address the details mentioned above.



The façade design for the 1352 Valley concept, approved with several conditions and revisions in 2013.



A mansard-fronted row at 1321-1333 Valley Place SE.



Gable-fronted houses on 25-foot-wide lots next door to 1350-1352 Valley Place SE.



An aerial photograph of the vacant subject site showing the immediate vicinity. Flat-roofed houses stand on Valley Place at left and on Chester Street at the top.